

SUPPLEMENT TO THE NÚR AFSHÁN

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Editorial Notes.

The subject of a National Religion for India cannot but awaken interest in the minds of many of our readers. Many will be prepared to dispute the claim of Christianity to be this religion. However the fact that it has proved its adaptability to the spiritual needs of men in every continent on the globe is *prima facie* a strong reason for believing it may be the religion of a future united Hindu nationality. At present there are two other claimants for this place—Moslem and Arya. A careful perusal of Mr. Golak Nath's paper will show pretty conclusively the futility of these claims. The elements of Love, Life and Progress in the Christian faith are a prophecy of future triumph.

We confess some surprise at the admission of the *Arya Patrika* made in the following sentence: "Our system says the *Núr Afshán* is 'largely constructed of materials borrowed from their Christian masters' and that there is nothing of positive character beyond it. There is of course, some beauty in the deliberate use of the phrase 'Christian Masters.' But we think all our Masters are not Christians: many of them are agnostics, atheists, Buddhists and what not. It would have been well if our contemporary had left out the word 'Chris-

tian.' Our Masters are 'English' and not 'Christians.'

Well it would truly have been more correct for us to have said "European Masters" rather than Christian Masters. If they had been real Christians the presumption is we should find more of positive instruction in Arya writing. We used the term in general as applying to nominal Christendom which when agnostic and even atheistic, is nevertheless saturated with much of real Christian thought and Christian ethics. We must however, express surprise at the sensitiveness of men who when charged with holding a faith for the most part negative in character, frankly admit among their Masters, European agnostics, atheists, Buddhists and what not.

We could hardly, find a specimen of Arya writing which would better illustrate our contention that Arya writing is wanting in the positive element than the reply of the *Arya Patrika* of May 6th to this very claim. With the ostensive purpose of setting forth something like positive teaching this writer pursues the usual course of denial of Christian teaching. He does not believe in the Trinity: he repudiates the Incarnation of God in Jesus Christ: he denies the doctrine of salvation by faith in an Atonement, &c. Of course we do not fail to see that an assumption of a superior doctrine runs through all such denials. Now the *Arya Patrika* finds itself in a world full of evil. It cannot be

deaf to the cries of men for relief. It knows the yearning of men for immortality and everlasting happiness. Will it not address itself to these great facts of human experience and present us with a positive, symmetrical system of faith and practice and show a remedy for the evils of sin and death better than that of the Gospels of Jesus Christ? A constant caviling at the doctrines of Christianity without proposing something higher and better can accomplish no positive good. That is truly Agnostic and therefore merely destructive.

The assertion is far from the truth that Christianity "does not inculcate the unity of Godhead"—that it "enjoins man-worship"—that by its doctrine of Incarnation it "denies that God is absolute, almighty and all-pervading" and that it is opposed to "the most fundamental and verified results of experience and science." Truly it does repudiate the *Philosophy* of Hindu Monism and Pantheism, but it renders a statement of truth on each and every one of these points satisfactory to thousands of the leading men in the spheres of Science and Philosophy. We are therefore obliged once more to ask our Arya friend to try again. Give us your solution of the great questions of the age. Drop the bundle of negations and build up a positive system of truth. Point out the way of life and tell us to walk in it. Give us the ideals greater than the person and life of Jesus of Nazareth.

MADE IN JAPAN

LIOM (Chapman)

Telegrams.

Bombay, May 11.

Much comment has been aroused by the refusal of the Captain of the Messageries steamer *Oceanien* to carry eight native passengers booked by the agent. The refusal had nothing to do with the quarantine or plague regulations. Captain Schmitz simply refused to have natives on board. The agent was helpless, and is making arrangements to send the passengers to Marseilles by a later steamer or by other lines.

DERVISH SURRENDER.

London, May 11.

A telegram from the *Times* Cairo correspondent says that 260 Dervishes, with numbers of women and children from the Khalifa's camp, have surrendered to the gunboats on the White Nile.

RUSSIA IN CHINA.

London, May 12.

M. de Giers, Russian Minister at Peking, has presented a demand to build a railway connecting the Manchurian railway system direct with Peking. The Chinese are much disconcerted.

RUMOURED FIGHTING.

London, May 12.

It is reported that fighting has taken place with Major Charter's expedition to Benin, and there are rumors that Lieutenant Unacke, of the 19th Hussars, has been killed.

SANITATION AT BOMBAY.

Bombay, May 13.

At a cost of Rs. 8,44,000 the Bombay Municipality has inaugurated a new system of refuse disposal. Eight hundred acres of land have been acquired at Devnar near Koorla, ten miles from Bombay, and a branch line constructed. The whole of the city refuse is thus taken out of the island and used to reclaim a piece of swampy ground.

THE WHITE MAN'S BURDEN.

THE POONA MURDERS.

Poona, May 12.

Balkrishna Hari Chapekar, the murderer of Lieutenant Ayerst on the Jubilee night, was executed at Yerrawda jail this morning. The Prisoner, though older and stronger than Wasudeo and Ranade, did not die with the same fortitude as his companions in crime but had to be literally forced up the scaffold. Many more persons were present at this than the other executions, but without exception the public was excluded. The arrangements and time however were quite the same as for the others. The prisoner is said to have remained fairly cheerful yesterday, but like Ranade ate nothing the whole time from Wednesday night. He spent hours in devotions, slept about an hour, and then continued his prayers till the death warrant was read at five minutes to seven, when his feelings appeared to overpower him and he began exclaiming incoherently. When passing out he shouted at the top of his voice "Sathe, goodbye!" Which Sathe, as likely as not, never heard, being far inside working out his ten years imprisonment. The prisoner's

beard had been allowed to grow, which gave him a wild haggard look. He was forced up the steps, and, arriving at the top stamped heavily on the trap and stood still till his other leg was forced forward and fastened. The prisoner continued calling on the god Shiva till the cap was drawn.

London, May 15.

CHINA'S SIGNIFICANT REPLY

The Tsung-li-Yamen, in reply to the Russian demand to connect the Manchurian system direct with Peking, says it can no longer believe in Russian promises of friendship.

FIGHTING IN THE PHILIPPINES.

London, May 15.

A telegraphic despatch from General Otis to Washington states that the Filipinos have requested permission to send a commission to Manila to arrange terms of peace with the United States. The request has been granted.

THE SOUDAN OPERATIONS.

London, May 15.

The *Daily News* correspondent at Cairo states that British troops are leaving Khartoum for the summer, and it is not thought that the Khalifa will take the offensive.

THE CARNEGIE STEEL WORKS.

Allahabad, May 16.

The Carnegie Steelworks, including mines, railways, collieries, and furnace, have been sold to a New York syndicate for three hundred million dollars, two-thirds going to Mr. Andrew Carnegie.

THE CRISIS IN THE TRANSVAAL.

London, May 16.

A great sensation has been caused in South Africa and in London by the news that seven officers, formerly belonging to the British Army, have been arrested at Johannesburg charged with inciting to treason and with the enrolment of men for the purposes of rebellion. All the prisoners have been conveyed to Pretoria, where they were lodged in a gaol. Mr. Conyngham Greene, the British Agent at Pretoria, has visited the prisoners in gaol.

THE HONG KONG EXTENSION.

London, May 16.

Advices from Hong Kong state that two thousand troops have left there for Kowloon under secret orders. Four British gunboats are co-operating with this force, and it is believed that the intention is to occupy Kowloon city and extend the new boundary to the hills at the back.

THE PEACE CONFERENCE.

London, May 16.

The representatives of the Powers at the approaching Peace conference are arriving at the Hague. The conference will open on Thursday next.

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and of its grammarians, statesmen, and philosophers; yet with all the glories of the past, it mourns to-day its decline and humiliation which began many centuries back. Why, it may be asked has the India of the Hindus fallen a victim to the doom of a nation overtaken by slavery? The Hindu national period may be divided into two marked historic periods. The Vedic and the Puranic or the heroic period. The Vedic period was a period of infancy. The ancient Aryan settlers on the plains of the Hindukush possessed a higher civilisation than the contemporary aborigines of India. The study of their manners and customs show that those were simple. There was no ritual, no sacerdotalism, no hierarchy. They lived more in accord with the dictates of nature than super-nature; but they called among numberless natural elements for nature's God. The ancient Rishi sang in hymns the praises of the manifold manifestations of nature. His infant heart cried for a personal but yet invisible God, and wanting a supernatural knowledge of God, his heart reached out in adoration to sensible objects. He called them his *mátá-pitá*. It was impossible that such infancy without guide or leader, and in all its naked simplicity should mould and construct a nation. Hence arose in time the Puranic period with its priesthood and ritual, and hierarchy and government. The brahmans in this period took the lead in all affairs of Hindu society, because they managed to possess the key to the hearts of the people. From them proceeded laws and directions. They consolidated the then existing society and brought it within practical domain. But the brahmanic rule, all the same, was short-lived. The brahmanic system lacked among other things the two essentials necessary to weld humanity in one consolidated brotherhood. It ignored the individual in society. This was its social defect. It ignored absolutely man's existence. This was its doctrinal defect. According to the one, it divided and subdivided man by impassable gulfs, into several castes, and made him a slave to ritual: according to the other, it regarded him as a nonentity and regarded God as the only entity. Hence arose in revolt Buddhism which asserted the rights of man in society. It soon established itself in popularity, and became the state religion. But it soon failed because it went to the other extreme—it ignored both society and God. Hence it is that the heroic period is full of records of the rise and fall of this and that sect. The Hindu society of that period has been likened to a pendulum swinging to and fro but wanting the centre of gravity to enable it to come to a fixed standard. Its theory of all-God which is equivalent to no God, and its practice of alienating man from common fellowship, has been at the bottom of its downfall.

To be continued.

A NATIONAL RELIGION IN INDIA.

REV. H. GOLAKNATH.

The very heading of a subject like this would startle the people of this country. India—the home and asylum, the scene and theatre of some of the foremost religions of the world—should yet feel the need for a national religion? Strange as it may appear, yet in the eyes of a religious reformer, or a statesman, or a socialist who has the best interest of India at heart, the fact is only too palpable to be questioned that India's greatest and heartfelt need is a national religion; a religion which binds man to man in one bond of universal, all-embracing brotherhood, and which unites mankind in common fellowship with the fatherhood of God. This is the touchstone we apply to estimate the value of any current religion which may pass in test before us. We will in the meantime clear the ground of our subject by taking a cursory, general survey of the present national aspect of India. Are there any real elements of a national life existing in India?

It may be said, as it is in fact often urged from the platform of such a political body as the National Congress, that when a people, inhabiting a common country, (no matter how far their creeds, or their racial temper or caste, differ, how wide the divergence obtaining between their religious and social customs and manners) are, in fact, subjects of one monarch, are barred from holding high offices by common limitations and disabilities, are in possession of common rights and privileges and a common language, those people are not thereby debarred from the right to be called a nation. This is a mere assertion. We have only to refer to the past and present history of India to see it refuted in its practical bearing.

As regards the past, we find that before the advent of the British, India was torn by constant internecine warfare, and by rival claims set up, by Hindus and Muhammadans, in turn. As regards the present—How far has the political propogandum of the National Congress been realised in practice? The *divide et impera* principle still rules the day: the caste and sectarian differences are intensified; the sectarian schools, colleges and associations are rapidly multiplied. We used to hear of the Anglo-Urdú, Arya, Khálsá and Islamia schools and colleges, but in these days, another is added to the number which claims to be a strictly Hindu college of Benares. This process of racial classification, of the building up of racial shibboleths which is going on in the present is surely no sign of a national existence. If it shows anything it is the repetition of the old struggle for national

(2)

existence with the survival of the fittest from among them—I say the old struggle, since India had such a struggle for national existence in the past. We therefore glean from the past and present of India this fact, that apart from community of several tastes, ideas, politics and language, religion is the *sine qua non* of a national existence. Man is a social being; he aims at association; the closer this relationship is formed, the stronger becomes the cord. Who can deny that the basis of society is religion? If there be more than one religion existing beside in a country like India, then more than one society is formed. Moreover as a matter of history, a struggle for pre-eminence would ensue, as has, times without number, taken place in India. The National Congress is for narrowing down the significance of society to one or two phases of human life to the detriment of the other equally essential phases. If society is individualised by caste and race distinctions particularly in India which is composed of not one but several races, then, in lieu of a nation its disintegration must take place. A house divided against itself can not stand. Such, in fact, happened in India when a mere handful of Europeans took possession of the country. Such is the actual state of India now that British rule is acknowledged from North to South. We have here Hindus, Mohamedans, Sikhs, and Parsees, each claiming a religion of its own, the basis of all their separate social functions, while each of them is subject of the one and same monarch. India is composed of a congeries of subject races, professing divers faiths. Each faith, as it is practised in life by its adherents, evolves its own distinctions and characteristics. These distinctions and peculiarities are good in themselves, because they go to contribute towards the sum total of national existence. We need as a nation the yeoman-like sterling qualities of a Gurkha or a Sikh:—the sturdy and manly qualities of a Muhammadan, and the mild, woman-like qualities of a Hindu or a Parsee. We need with the martial qualities of the one, the intellectual qualities of the other. But, alas, the connecting link is wanting to bind them together in the tie of common fellowship. The nation is made up of an aggregate of individuals composing it; but if those individuals are separated by racial distinctions of religion and caste, then the aggregate resultant is not a nation proper, but a conglomeration of races. India, considered in the aggregate, is a conglomeration of races with differences as wide asunder as the poles. We should carefully bear in mind that in speaking of India in general, we are not to be understood as speaking of the Hindu India, or the Muhammedan India in particular, but of India made up of the several races, each of which claims to be playing a part of the national

(3)

life. Indian history is full of records of their past struggles for victory and pre-eminence as a nation:—now of the rise and fall of the Hindu dynasty, now of the downfall of the Muhammadan power, now of the dominance of the Sikhs in the North, and of the Maharattas in the South—until at last the subjugation of all, under the sway of a Christian nation.

Here then, is the actual India before us consisting of not one but several subject races, each living peaceably and safely (to use sacred Jewish expression) *under its own vine and its own fig tree*. In the great struggle for national existence, while the Hindus as a race have survived, so have the Muhammadans, and so have the other races equally survived yet as a nation not one of them has survived. One and all the races of India have died out in the struggle for national existence. The fact that the races of India have survived as units, if not constituent parts, of a nation, goes to show conclusively that Providence has reserved a great future in which all the races now divided by racial, social, and religious barriers shall be amalgamated by indissoluble ties; and when this, much to be wished for consummation is reached, then shall be the dawn of the national star of India.

Neo-Hinduism of to-day pluming itself on its new reasonings about the brotherhood of man is, in fact, putting a gloss on the existing religious caste distinctions, by preaching a false toleration. As streams of a river, so it reasons, branching out in various directions, ultimately converge to meet in the ocean; so too the various religions adopted by several races serve the same end. The toleration of existing distinctions is certainly not the breath and spirit of the brotherhood of man. We indeed feel the need of one national religion for India which in our existing dislocated social circumstances, may blend each and all, in ties of fellow-feeling and brotherhood. Until this consummation is reached, the term nation now applied to India is a misnomer.

Let us enumerate the three foremost religions of India: *Hinduism*, *Sikhism*, and *Muhammadanism*.

Let us see if any of these meet all the requirements of a national religion. We will apply the touch-stone mentioned above to test the value of each of these religions.

1. THE HINDOO RELIGION. We are not limited to theorising about Hinduism. It has already played its part to the full as a historic national religion of India. The Hindu race, the ancient inhabitants of this Aryavarth, boasts, and boasts rightly of its past heroes, its military prowess, its intellectual achievements, its Rishis and Munis, the authors of the Vedas, its pundits, the authors of the Upanishads and the Paranas, its poets, the authors of the epic poems, the Ramayan and the Mahabharat,

